Hello CDL families! Welcome to another Fall semester at the CDL! Our semester is off to a very busy start. We have an unusually low number of practicum students this semester. There is a total of 6; 2 in each classroom. The students have been ready and eager to get into the classrooms. Our enrollment is full! We have a total of 40 children enrolled at the CDL, and we welcomed 5 new families! Also welcome to all of our staff; we have a new Graduate Assistant in the Preschool room this fall, Frank Ettorre; and, a new Preschool Assistant Teacher, Kayla Chandler! We are thrilled to welcome these two as they completed their 490 practicum this past spring and summer in the Preschool room, respectively. Another new addition to our team is Genesis Vega; serving as an Assistant Teacher in ITT East. Genesis completed her 490 practicum this past summer in East. Happily, we have not had professional staff turnover for a while now, and we welcome all of our returning professional staff back. We are so grateful to have such high quality professional staff who make this program outstanding!

As mentioned above, the CDL is very busy this semester with having a low number of practicum students. We realize that in the ITT area in particular, this low staffing number is highly unusual and not what we are used to at the CDL. The flow of incoming practicum students is fluid each semester and seems to shift one way or another. These shifts can be caused by a number of things as a student runs through their academic program; such as, not passing prerequisite coursework; dropping from the Child Development emphasis; changing majors all together; personal issues that compromise academic progression; when they were admitted to the major and when they began their track of coursework; etc. This semester is the lowest that I have seen it be and is not typical. As I look at the practicum placement projection for Spring 18, Summer 18, and Fall 18—we have plenty of students in the queue. With that said, I have been given approval from my department to hire additional teaching staff to assist us through this semester. Finding the additional staff is the challenge, as they need to have First Aid/CPR certification, and have a certain level of credential training per a new Department of Human Services (DHS) mandate requiring multiple hours of on-line trainings and certification. Gone are the days of being able to quickly hire staff and get them in the rooms if they do not have these specific requirements. The federal government is now requiring that child care centers complete these trainings and hold these credentials for ALL employees—no matter how many hours they work or for how long of a time period they work. Should a center not comply with these mandates, and have staff not meet these qualifications, all Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) reimbursements will be withheld from the center. If I hire an employee without these required trainings and certification, then I need to pay for them to complete them prior to the employee being in the classroom. The intentions behind the new mandates are good, as the trainings focus on child development, health, and safety — however, the impacts on centers financially are devastating (as they have to pay employees for hours of trainings), and the ability to quickly staff classrooms becomes a significant challenge.
Also, as many of you know, the CDL was closed on August 18 for a Professional Development Day. The entire day was full of insightful and relevant workshops and topics for the CDL staff. Reviewing the results of the Family Surveys, the Staff Surveys, and the Practicum Student Evaluations, our staff identified areas of strength, challenges, and areas to grow. The CDL staff will be continuing this conversation at our upcoming staff meeting in September to finalize our annual goals for FY 18. Furthermore, we assessed our progress on FY 17 annual goals. Parent evaluations last year indicated the desire to see more opportunities for parents to feel connected and interact with one another. I brought this to the Parent Advisory Board in the Fall semester, and the group provided valuable input. It was discussed that parents do not have the desire to have an opportunity to have a leadership role in the arrangements or facilitation of an event, but rather they are interested in attending organized events as they are planned at the CDL. As such, some action steps were formulated to assist in reaching this goal. In the spring semester, the Preschool staff planned for and facilitated an informative Kindergarten Readiness workshop. This workshop brought together 8 families who all had a common connection with their concern about their child’s kindergarten transition. Another opportunity for parents to interact with one another was our Garden Day in spring. What an amazing turnout we had throughout the entire center—the Garden Day was truly a family affair!

Last semester I mentioned there would be upcoming changes to the meal patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). I attending an 8 hour workshop that went into great detail this upcoming changes. The purpose of the changes were: to align CACFP with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA); address the current health status of children & adults; and, enhance the nutritional quality of meals and snacks. I was rather relieved as I was sitting in the training to hear that the CDL already is following many of these more nutritious changes; including offering foods lower in sugar and many fresh fruits, whole grains—such as whole grain wheat bread for toast; and, real cheese. According to the CACFP (prior to the updates and changes), it would have been perfectly acceptable and reimbursable for the CDL to serve the children deep fat-fried food, Cheese Whiz, Pop Tarts, cakes and cookies, brownies, granola bars, Froot Loops, doughnuts, sweet rolls, and pie. The CDL has never served these items. The cereals that the new meal patterns approve of align with the WIC program; these are the same cereals that we have always been serving (e.g.—Kix, Chex, Cheerios). One change that may impact some of our infant families pertains to the Infant Meal Pattern. The new meal pattern break the ages into 2 age groups (as opposed to 3); 0-5 months & 6-11 months. Through the first 5 months, the only meal component required for infants is breastmilk or formula; with the minimum serving size being 4-6 oz. Solids such as cereals and baby food are expected to be detained until the child is around 6 months or after, as developmentally ready. I realize that this is a very sensitive subject with babies and their food...so please just talk with your child’s teacher about this.

The CDL will be resuming Parent Advisory Board meetings this semester. The dates are scheduled for September 19 and October 10 from 3:30-4:30 pm. in Wirtz Hall room 116. All parents are welcome; email to follow with more details.

Finally, I would just like to wish everyone a great fall semester! Please read through the rest of the newsletter to see what is going on in the classrooms! GO HUSKIES!!!

Lisa Schmidt
Co-Director for Operations

SEPTEMBER 2017
Greetings Families!

We are super excited to welcome our new interns Alex and Eva to our classroom. Alex was our summer volunteer and Eva is new to our classroom. Frank will be returning as a Graduate Assistant. Congratulations Frank! Frank has been with us as a student worker and as a practicum intern. Kayla just finished her practicum over the summer. We are very thankful to have her as an Assistant Teacher this semester.

The children have been searching for bugs on the playground and asking questions. We researched cicadas, cicada killers, butterflies, caterpillars, and spiders. We learned about where they live and what their purpose is. Our garden is continuing to thrive. The broccoli is getting tall and the peppers are starting to grow. The flowers are vibrant and in full bloom. The children have been playing house while making cakes, cookies, and pies in the kitchen. We have been working on our climbing and jumping down skills on the climber and soft mats outside. We are excited to welcome Olivia and River to our classroom. Have a wonderful semester!

Sincerely,
Kristi, Jamie, Frank, & Kayla

Charlee found a cicada and cicada shells on our playground. We could hear them singing, which is their mating call.

Chandler and Caden are building sand castles in the sand.

Jane and our new friend Olivia ran around smiling and laughing on our playground.
Hello there from the ITT East Classroom!

We hope this update finds you all well and enjoying the last few weeks of summer. First and foremost, we would like to give a warm welcome to our new children; Liam and Chance. We are very thrilled to have them in our classroom and are happy to have our old friends back from the summer as well! We are excited to see each transform and develop over the next few months! Along with that, Elena will be floater graduate assistant between both ITT classrooms! We would also like to welcome our two new interns. Kelsey Khulman is our morning intern, working 8:30-2:30. Shannon Bowen our afternoon intern, working 10:30-4:30. The interns’ new schedule may affect the amount of verbal communication in regards to their primaries day. We will work diligently in utilizing various forms of communication to ensure you receive updates about your child’s day. This can be done by email and/or notes from your child’s student primary.

The interns have been attentively building relationships with their primaries and their families the last couple of weeks and getting to know them quite well. Kelsey will be the first to lead teach starting September 18, 2017. We are curious and excited to see what innovative ideas she has planned for us!

Best,

Clarissa, Christy P., Nat, Genesis, & Elena
Welcome ITT West Families,

Welcome back everyone! We want to first welcome our Fall 2017 interns, Tena and Kelsey! What they lack in numbers, they make up in their nurturing nature, experience and willingness to learn! There are very excited about forming bonds with your child and implementing new activities.

We would also like to welcome the newest members to the West Classroom, DeAngelo and Avery M. It has already been an interesting experience teaching our toddlers that we now have two children named Avery in our classroom!

Having a center located on campus comes with its fair share of perks. NIU offers a plethora of resources for your child’s enjoyment and their development. These include:

- **Kite Fest**
- **Outdoor Adventures Camp on Campus**
- **Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic**
- **NIU Community School of Arts**

Just a couple reminders, we will be closed in observance of Labor Day on September 4th. Sunscreen and swimwear can be taken home this month. Please make sure to have at least two full outfits for your child’s cubby.

We look forward to what this semester may bring. If you have any questions or concerns, don’t hesitate to contact Ecila or Krysten.

Sincerely,

Ecila, Krysten, Magaly, and Megan